

Kolloquium

zu laufenden
Forschungsarbeiten
Wintersemester 2026/27
Frankfurt am Main
Programm



FROBENIUS-INSTITUT
FÜR KULTURANTHROPOLOGISCHE
FORSCHUNG



**Frobenius
Gesellschaft**

Kolloquium zu laufenden Forschungsarbeiten

Wintersemester 2026/27

Montags 16.15 Uhr – 17.45 Uhr
IG-Farben-Haus
Raum IG 454
Campus Westend
Goethe-Universität
Norbert-Wollheim-Platz 1
60323 Frankfurt am Main

Das Forschungskolloquium wird geleitet von
Roland Hardenberg und findet in Präsenz statt.

Im Anschluss an jede Sitzung laden wir alle Teilnehmenden
zu einem kleinen Sektempfang in den Räumen des Frobenius-
Instituts ein.

Es ist keine Anmeldung erforderlich.

Keine Videoaufnahmen während des Vortrags.

Programm

19. Okt 2026 **Animacy, time and space: the logic of hair exchange in Tbilisi and the wholeness of a fragmented body**
Ketevan Lapachi
Ilia State University, Tbilisi, Georgia
-
26. Okt 2026 **Gutpela Sindaun wantaim? Eigen- und Fremdwahrnehmung kirchlicher Überseebegegnungen**
Hans-Georg Tannhäuser
Pfarrer i. R. 2009 bis 2023, Referent für Asien/Pazifik beim Missionswerk Leipzig (Werk der Ev.-Luth. Kirche)
-
02. Nov 2026 **The killing of a dog: the slaughterers of Parakou and their rites and practices of ambiguation**
Daniel Repky
Goethe-Universität Frankfurt
-
09. Nov 2026 **When nature is no longer sacred: ontological encounters and frictions in human-environment relations among the Konso of Ethiopia**
Asrat Cella
Center for Development Research (ZEF) - Cultural and Political Change
-

16. Nov 2026 **From gut to ground: tracing human-microbial ecologies in everyday food practices**
Katharina Graf
Institute of Cultural Anthropology & European Ethnology, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt
-
23. Nov 2026 **What anthropomorphism achieves: plant companions and migrant world-making**
Hilal Alkan
Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin
-
30. Nov 2026 **Feeling the eagle, voicing the soul: interspecies apprenticeship, moral presence, listening and speech in Kyrgyz and Kazakh eagle-hunting**
Federica Nardella
American University of Central Asia, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
-
07. Dez 2026 **Living side by side: everyday interactions in Bishkek's multireligious neighborhoods**
Baktygul Shabdan
Goethe-Universität Frankfurt, LOEWE-Zentrum „Dynamiken des Religiösen“
-
14. Dez 2026 **Todos seres encantados. Huni-Kuin-Kosmopolitik zwischen der Boa und der Bibel**
Felix Uhl
Goethe-Universität Frankfurt
-
18. Jan 2027 **Singen und Alimentation, Aushandlungen von *ownership* zwischen Pflanzen und Menschen**
Matthias Lewy
Transcultural Music Studies, Hochschule für Musik Franz Liszt Weimar
-
25. Jan 2027 **Why cultural landscapes are important for heritage conservation?**
Maya Ishizawa Escudero
Independent heritage specialist, Secretary General of the ICOMOS-IFLA International Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes
-
01. Feb 2027 **Beyond the image: film restitution, epistemic agency, and the cosmopolitics of the archive**
Igor Karim
Frobenius-Institut, Frankfurt
-
08. Feb 2027 **Religious and social divisions in Ethiopian Antika painting**
Hanna Rubinkowska-Aniol
Lehrstuhl für afrikanische Sprachen und Kulturen, University of Warsaw

Animacy, time and space: the logic of hair exchange in Tbilisi and the wholeness of a fragmented body

Ketevan Lapachi

Ilia State University, Tbilisi, Georgia



The paper connects Georgian mythology to the hair-exchange network in Tbilisi and explores the logic of hair exchange, which is based on the Cartesian understanding of the body but is yet shaped by pre-Cartesian body imagination. In Georgian mythology, animacy is associated with the integrity of the body; different parts of the body are synecdochic of the whole. The loss of a body part is linked with the loss of the soul. In tales about illness, death and the afterlife, such a body part may be the eye. In myths about forest deities, it is hair. Therefore, the paper considers the possibility of restoring bodily integrity as a prerequisite for creating value in hair exchange, structuring time around this possibility rather than reciprocity, which is traditionally considered the primary driving force behind exchange-based relationships.

Gutpela Sindaun wantaim? Eigen- und Fremdwahrnehmung kirchlicher Überseebegegnungen



Hans-Georg Tannhäuser

Pfarrer i. R. 2009 bis 2023 Referent für Asien/
Pazifik beim Missionswerk Leipzig (Werk der
Ev.-Luth. Kirche)

Seit mehreren Jahrhunderten gibt es Begegnungen protestantischer Kirchen und Missionsgesellschaften nach Übersee. Die Intention war und ist die Ermöglichung eines sinnerfüllten Lebens (gutpela sindaun = Lebensqualität in Tok Pisin) auf der Grundlage des christlichen Glaubens. Die Bewertungen dieser Kontakte, Initiativen und gemeinsamer geschichtlicher Entwicklungen fallen je nach Perspektive sehr unterschiedlich aus und es werden oft ganz unterschiedliche Schlüsse gezogen. Um die Vergangenheit aufzuarbeiten und um sinnvolle Entscheidungen im Miteinander (wantaim) für die Zukunft zu treffen, ist es wichtig alle Stimmen miteinzubeziehen. Dazu gehören die Gesellschaften und Kirchen in Übersee, die westlichen Kirchen als ursprüngliche Auslöser des Kulturkontaktes und die Beurteilung verschiedener Wissenschaften aus heutiger Sicht.

Der Beitrag ist als eine persönliche Reflexion zu verstehen, die eigene Erfahrungen in den Kontext weiterer Wahrnehmungen und Einschätzungen stellt. Dabei werden kirchliche Missions- und Entwicklungsarbeit, sowie heutige postkoloniale Fragestellungen und Themenfelder berührt.

The killing of a dog: the slaughterers of Parakou and their rites and practices of ambiguation



Daniel Repky

Goethe-Universität Frankfurt

What, *prima vista*, appears to be nothing more than a mere transaction of a commodity in exchange for cash, a piece of dog meat for a handful of West African Francs in one of the many marketplaces in the city of Parakou in northeastern Benin, inevitably turns out to be rather the selling of ideas (and ideals) surrounding the material in question once the dog slaughterers' perspectives are taken into account: In order to meet the conceived expectations and needs of their clients from different regional, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds, they meticulously 'handcraft' a product by openly evoking and negotiating meaning via ritualistic and practical devices. Hence, even a simple act like the killing of a dog by publicly cutting its throat creates a contested space for ambiguous symbols alluding to (Muslim) customs regarding alimentary restrictions and purity, as well as signifying sacrificial notions (e. g. in the Old Testament), and reinforcing their own indigenous systems of knowledge – all at once.

When nature is no longer sacred: ontological encounters and frictions in human-environment relations among the Konso of Ethiopia



Asrat Cella

Center for Development Research (ZEF) - Cultural
and Political Change

The traditional culture and belief system of the Konso people views humans and the environment as intricately interconnected entities. Konso myths of origin, sacred forests, agricultural rites, totems, and cleansing rituals, all showcase the deep interconnectedness and mutual reciprocity between humans and nature. However, the incorporation of the Konso into the Ethiopian empire in the late 19th century and the reign of Marxist-Leninist regime of the Derg in the 1970s/80s, the introduction of Christianity, and the expansion and consolidation of modernity have triggered a shift away from the relational and reciprocal views and weakened the traditions of the Konso. Such encounters between seemingly different 'worlds' and forces have shaped and continue shaping the human-environment relations in Konso. This presentation looks at the past, present, and future of human-environment relations in the Konso cultural landscape, a world heritage site, and argues that human-environment relations are co-constructed through interactions, frictions and encounters between seemingly contradicting ontologies and epistemologies which compete but also sometimes co-exist.

From gut to ground: tracing human-microbial ecologies in everyday food practices



Katharina Graf

Institute of Cultural Anthropology & European Ethnology, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt

Microbes are everywhere and we increasingly understand how they affect human nutrition and health. Yet, research around them – mostly in the medical and life sciences – focuses largely on very specific microbial environments, the human gut or the soil, and on very specific facts, their genetic composition or association with other micro-species. But microbes know no limits and human bodies are fluid, as food anthropologists among others have recently shown. This anthro-bio-logical project will work with this fluidity and trace human-microbial ecologies from the human gut back via domestic and public food spaces to the ground through a focus on everyday food practices such as provisioning, processing, storing, cooking and eating. Ultimately, this project seeks to explore how everyday sociobiological food practices affect human-microbial interactions and thus wishes to contribute to a growing understanding of the complex entanglements between humans and microbes and how they impact human and environmental health.

What anthropomorphism achieves: plant companions and migrant world-making



Hilal Alkan

Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin

My ethnographic research with Turkish and Kurdish migrants in Berlin examines the multiple affordances of plants in migrants' experiences of emplacement. In this talk, I focus on one such affordance – one that does not stem directly from plants themselves but from the relational field between humans and plants: anthropomorphic ascriptions. I ask under what circumstances plants become persons and what they offer to their human carers. Bringing strands of ontological anthropology into conversation with migration studies, I explore how to approach the materialities of plants and people as they encounter one another amid the unsettling process of making new homes. This process unfolds within environments marked by climatic and societal difference, xenophobia, and precarity, while migrants draw reciprocal parallels between themselves and their plant companions. These parallels – anthropomorphisms and phytomorphisms – emerge as modalities of intimacy that enable not only home-making but also broader forms of world-making, generating meanings about the migrant condition that exceed metaphor.

Feeling the eagle, voicing the soul: interspecies apprenticeship, moral presence, listening and speech in Kyrgyz and Kazakh eagle-hunting



Federica Nardella

American University of Central Asia in Bishkek,
Kyrgyzstan

This presentation explores how voices mediate moral presence in the man/golden eagle partnerships of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan's eagle-hunting through the Sufi concept of *suhba* and moral excellence. The human voice is central to developing and maintaining the bond with the birds, who grow accustomed to the hunter's timbre. *Suhba* is spiritual companionship characterised by conversation and communion between a disciple (*murīd*) and a master (*murshīd* or *shaykh*) (Silverstein 2008; Nakissa 2019). This dialogue is not always verbal, but primarily intuitive. The self is cultivated and knowledge transmitted through 'presence'. These master/disciple dynamics characterise eagle-hunting's human/nonhuman 'apprenticeships' (McGough 2019, 19). Here, vocality intertwines with morality as voice manifests the human's nature. According to hunters, immoral behaviour irritates the eagle, who then refuses to work with them. The presence of the spoken word, beyond meaning-production, fosters interspecies intimacy and recognition, shaping the moral presence demanded by the nonhuman.

Living side by side: everyday interactions in Bishkek's multireligious neighborhoods



Baktygul Shabdan

Goethe-Universität Frankfurt, LOEWE-Zentrum
„Dynamiken des Religiösen“

Following the end of Soviet state atheism, Kyrgyzstan has experienced a significant religious revival. In Bishkek, neighborhoods once characterized by secular institutions such as schools, kindergartens, post offices, and shops have increasingly become home to mosques, churches, and diverse religious communities. Based on ethnographic fieldwork, this talk examines everyday life in these multireligious neighborhoods, focusing on how religious belonging, identities, and practices shape interactions among neighbors and how secular and religious spaces are negotiated and shared. It argues that, despite the growing visibility of religious institutions and increased individual engagement with religion, religious belonging generally remains a matter of personal belief and practice. At the same time, religion has a visible social dimension in everyday interactions, shaping how neighbors relate to one another and navigate religious differences. The talk also considers the increasingly prominent presence of Islam in Bishkek's public sphere, raising questions about perceptions of religious dominance and how residents of different faiths experience and negotiate these changing religious landscapes.

Todos seres encantados. Huni-Kuin-Kosmopolitik zwischen der Boa und der Bibel

Felix Uhl
Goethe-Universität Frankfurt

Religiöse Dynamiken bei indigenen Völkern
Amazoniens wie den Huni Kuin zeichnen sich durch die gegenseitige Überlagerung vielfältigster Einflüsse aus – katholische wie evangelikale Missionare, indigene Kosmologien, regionale Magiesysteme, neuerdings auch New-Age-Spiritualität durch den Zustrom von Touristen. In diesem komplexen religiösen Feld bedarf es einer pragmatischen wie ausgefeilten Kosmopolitik, die bewusst Beziehungen zu menschlichen wie nicht-menschlichen Anderen gestaltet, um Gesundheit, Wohlstand, und sozialen Frieden zu bewahren, aber auch die Stellung der Huni Kuin in der globalisierten Welt behauptet. Doch wie genau navigieren Huni Kuin zwischen den kosmischen Akteuren ihrer Mythen und denjenigen, die sie durch nicht-indigene kennengelernt haben? Am Beispiel der Huni Kuin zeigt Felix Uhl, dass sich bei amazonischen Gesellschaften Kosmologie, Politik und zwischenmenschliche soziale Beziehungen gegenseitig bedingen. Er verdeutlicht dies auf Basis seiner laufenden Forschung anhand mehrerer Bereiche, die die Prinzipien von Huni-Kuin-Kosmopolitik sichtbar machen: Heilung, Ritual und die Gestaltung des dörflichen Zusammenlebens.



Singen und Alimentation, Aushandlungen von *ownership* zwischen Pflanzen und Menschen



Maththias Lewy

Transcultural Music Studies, Hochschule für Musik
Franz Liszt Weimar

Der Vortrag untersucht Aushandlungsprozesse von *ownership* zwischen menschlichen und pflanzlichen Entitäten, die über formalisierten Klang verlaufen. Ausgangspunkt ist der ontological turn, der Beziehungen zwischen Menschen und Nicht-Menschen analytisch plausibel macht, erweitert um das Konzept eines indigenen Sonorismus und um Klangontologien, in denen Gesang nicht referentiell gelesen wird, sondern Handlungsmacht und Personen hervorbringt. Zwei Fälle aus der Ethnographie der Pemón stehen im Zentrum. Zum einen die Beziehung zu Püreri pachi, der Interiorität der Yuccapflanze, deren Gesänge als Nahrungsersatz fungieren und ein Verhältnis von Alimentation und Familiarisierung instaurieren. Zum anderen der kanaimatón-Komplex, eine Form des Antischamanismus, in der sich die Richtung von *ownership* umkehren kann und der Mensch zum Vehikel der Pflanze wird. Beide Pole führen des weiteren zu der Frage, wie mit Tondokumenten umzugehen ist, deren Aufnahme sensible Beziehungsgefüge berührt, also zu jenem Moment, in dem die Aufnahmetechnik neue Entitäten erzeugt.

Why cultural landscapes are important for heritage conservation?



Maya Ishizawa Escudero

Independent heritage specialist, Secretary
General of the ICOMOS-IFLA International
Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes

The protection of cultural landscapes as a heritage category has developed over a century of conservation theory and practice. From an initial protection of landscapes as national parks under nature conservation approaches, to understanding the importance of the setting of historical monuments, the specificities required by historic gardens and parks, and the need to safeguard rural areas, the breakthrough came with the recognition of 'cultural landscapes' in the context of the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in 1992. At present, cultural landscapes are valued not only in the heritage field but also for food security in the agricultural sector, for balancing sustainable development and nature conservation, and through concepts of biocultural heritage in biodiversity conservation circles. This lecture will focus on how cultural landscapes have influenced heritage conservation theory and practice, and what are the current and emerging challenges in implementing their identification, protection and management, in relation to wider sustainable development goals.

Beyond the image: film restitution, epistemic agency, and the cosmopolitics of the archive



Igor Karim

Frobenius-Institut, Frankfurt

The restitution of ethnographic films and images raises a problem that cannot be resolved through their physical return alone: because these materials are reproducible, restitution must address not only ownership but also the authority to interpret, edit, classify, and circulate them. Drawing on the Frobenius Institute's South Ethiopian film archive, the *Reclaiming Narratives* project develops a collaborative model of editorial and legal restitution. The project provides Ethiopian filmmakers in consultation with knowledge-holding communities with access to the digitalized film archive, copyright co-ownership, and editorial agency to reuse, re-edit, and re-classify archival footage. Re-editing ethnographic footage into new narratives enables filmmakers to challenge the original scientific gaze, introduce perspectives excluded from the source material, and place archival images within contemporary contexts. I argue that film restitution involves not simply returning images as archival property but redistributing the power to determine what images mean and what they can become. In this process, the archive shifts from a repository of modern scientific representations to a site of contemporary memory production, negotiation, and epistemic reconfiguration.

Religious and social divisions in Ethiopian Antika Painting



Hanna Rubinkowska-Anioł
Lehrstuhl für afrikanische Sprachen und Kulturen,
University of Warsaw

Ethiopian modern painting in the traditional style, commonly known as Antika or 'Airport Art', emerged in the early twentieth century and has since become one of the most recognizable forms of Ethiopian visual culture. While produced for both local and international audiences, these paintings convey and reinforce values associated with the Christian Orthodox, Semitic-language-speaking communities that have historically occupied a dominant position within the Ethiopian state. As a visual medium, Antika art communicates narratives of Ethiopia's long history, political authority, and religious identity through a rich repertoire of symbols and iconographic conventions. At the same time, it reflects broader social hierarchies and cultural perceptions. This paper explores the ways in which Antika paintings represent religious and social divisions, paying particular attention to the visual construction of identity and the depiction of skin colour. It argues that these images not only reproduce established notions of ethnicity, religion, and power, but also reveal underlying social attitudes toward difference, offering valuable insights into the intersections of art, identity, and hierarchy in modern Ethiopia.

Werden Sie Mitglied



Die Frobenius-Gesellschaft, gegründet 1924, ist einer der ältesten ethnologischen Fördervereine im deutschsprachigen Raum.

Zielsetzung der Frobenius-Gesellschaft ist die Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten des Frobenius-Instituts, von Forschungsprojekten und Publikationen sowie Veranstaltungen.

Als Mitglied der Frobenius-Gesellschaft profitieren Sie vom kostenlosen Bezug der Zeitschrift Paideuma und unserem Newsletter sowie Einladungen zu unseren Veranstaltungen.

Ermäßigter Jahresbeitrag für Studierende: 25 Euro
Regulärer Jahresbeitrag: 50 Euro

Bei Erteilung einer Einzugsermächtigung ermäßigt sich der Mitgliedsbeitrag auf 20 bzw. 40 Euro.

Formlose Aufnahmeanträge können per E-Mail an die Geschäftsstelle gesendet werden: frobenius@em.uni-frankfurt.de



FROBENIUS-INSTITUT
FÜR KULTURANTHROPOLOGISCHE
FORSCHUNG

Goethe-Universität
Norbert-Wollheim-Platz 1
60323 Frankfurt am Main

Telefon +49(0)69 798 33050

Fax +49(0)69 798 33101

frobenius@em.uni-frankfurt.de

www.frobenius-institut.de